

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1-5 (canceled)

1 Claim 6 (previously presented): A method of operating a communications device, the  
2 method comprising:  
3                   accessing a voice message system;  
4                   retrieving, over a public telephone network, a voice message from the  
5 voice message system;  
6                   generating a digital audio file representing said message;  
7                   storing the retrieved voice message in a memory device from which  
8 the service subscriber can retrieve messages by telephone;  
9                   sending, using at least one Internet Protocol (IP) packet, the digital  
10 audio file representing said message to a service subscriber;  
11                   receiving a reply to said sending the digital audio file;  
12                   deleting the retrieved message from said voice message system in  
13 response to receiving said reply; and  
14                   in response to receiving said reply, deleting the retrieved message  
15 from the memory device.

1 Claim 7 (currently amended): A method of operating a communications device, the  
2 method comprising:  
3                   accessing a voice message system;  
4                   retrieving, over a public telephone network, a voice message from the  
5 voice message system;  
6                   generating a digital audio file representing said message;  
7                   sending, using at least one Internet Protocol (IP) packet, the digital  
8 audio file representing said message to a service subscriber;

9 ~~The method of claim 1, further comprising:~~

10 receiving an E-mail message including a telephone number and an  
11 audio file; and  
12 initiating a telephone call using said telephone number.

1 Claim 8 (previously presented): A method of operating a communications device, the  
2 method comprising:

3 accessing a voice message system;  
4 retrieving, over a public telephone network, a voice message from the  
5 voice message system;  
6 generating a digital audio file representing said message;  
7 sending, using at least one Internet Protocol (IP) packet, the digital  
8 audio file representing said message to a service subscriber;  
9 receiving an E-mail message including a telephone number and an  
10 audio file;  
11 initiating a telephone call using said telephone number;  
12 monitoring to detect a speech signal followed by a period of silence;  
13 and  
14 upon detecting said period of silence, playing the audio file.

1 Claim 9 (currently amended): A method of operating a communications device, the  
2 method comprising:

3 accessing a first voice message system;  
4 retrieving, over a public telephone network, a voice message from the  
5 first voice message system;  
6 generating a digital audio file representing said message;  
7 sending, using at least one Internet Protocol (IP) packet, the digital  
8 audio file representing said message to a service subscriber;

9 ~~The method of claim 1, further comprising:~~

10 storing a first prompt message; ~~and~~  
11 determining from subscriber input when the first prompt message  
12 should be loaded onto said first voice message system; ~~and~~  
13 determining from said subscriber input when the first prompt message  
14 should be loaded onto a second voice message system.  
15

1 Claim 10 (currently amended): The method of claim 9, further comprising:  
2 placing a call to said first voice message system; and  
3 loading said answering first voice message system with the first  
4 prompt message.

1 Claim 11 (currently amended): The method of claim 10, further comprising the step  
2 of:  
3 determining from subscriber input when a second prompt message  
4 should be loaded onto said first voice message system.

1 Claim 12 (currently amended): The method of claim 11, further comprising the step  
2 of:  
3 placing an additional call to said first voice message system; and  
4 loading the second prompt message into said first voice message  
5 system.

1 Claim 13 (original): The method of claim 9, wherein the step of determining from  
2 subscriber input when the first prompt message should be loaded includes the step of:  
3 accessing a prompt message schedule generated from subscriber input.

1 Claim 14 (original): A method of controlling a voice message system, comprising:

2 receiving an E-mail message indicating that a voice message retrieved  
3 from said voice message system and forwarded to a service subscriber was reviewed;  
4 in response to receiving said E-mail message, accessing said voice  
5 message system; and  
6 controlling said voice message system to delete said retrieved voice  
7 message.

1 Claim 15 (original): The method of claim 14, wherein the step of accessing said  
2 voice message system includes:  
3 placing a telephone call to said voice message system over a telephone  
4 network; and  
5 sending a control signal to said voice message system over said  
6 telephone network causing said retrieved voice message to be deleted from said voice  
7 message system.

1 Claim 16 (original): The method of claim 15, wherein a voice message retrieval and  
2 forwarding device is used to place said call and to send said control signal, the  
3 method further comprising the step of:  
4 in response to receiving said E-mail message, operating the voice  
5 message retrieval and forwarding device to delete a copy of the retrieved voice  
6 message from a storage device included in the voice message retrieval and forwarding  
7 device.

1 Claim 17 (previously presented): A method of controlling a voice message system,  
2 comprising:  
3 receiving an E-mail message indicating that a voice message retrieved  
4 from said voice message system and forwarded to a service subscriber was reviewed;

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5                   operating a subscriber computer system to automatically generate said  
6   E-mail message when a user of the subscriber computer system accesses an E-mail  
7   message which includes said retrieved message as an attached audio file;  
8                   in response to receiving said automatically generated E-mail message,  
9   accessing said voice message system by placing a telephone call to said voice  
10   message system over a telephone network; and  
11                  sending a control signal to said voice message system over said  
12   telephone network causing said retrieved voice message to be deleted from said voice  
13   message system.

Claims 18-23 (previously canceled)

Claim 24 (canceled)

1   Claim 25 (original): A device for controlling a voice message system, comprising:  
2                   means for receiving an E-mail message indicating that a voice message  
3   retrieved from said voice message system and forwarded to a service subscriber was  
4   reviewed;  
5                   means for accessing said voice message system in response to  
6   receiving said E-mail message; and  
7                   means for controlling said voice message system to delete said  
8   retrieved voice message.

Claims 26-28 (previously canceled)

Claim 29-35 (canceled)